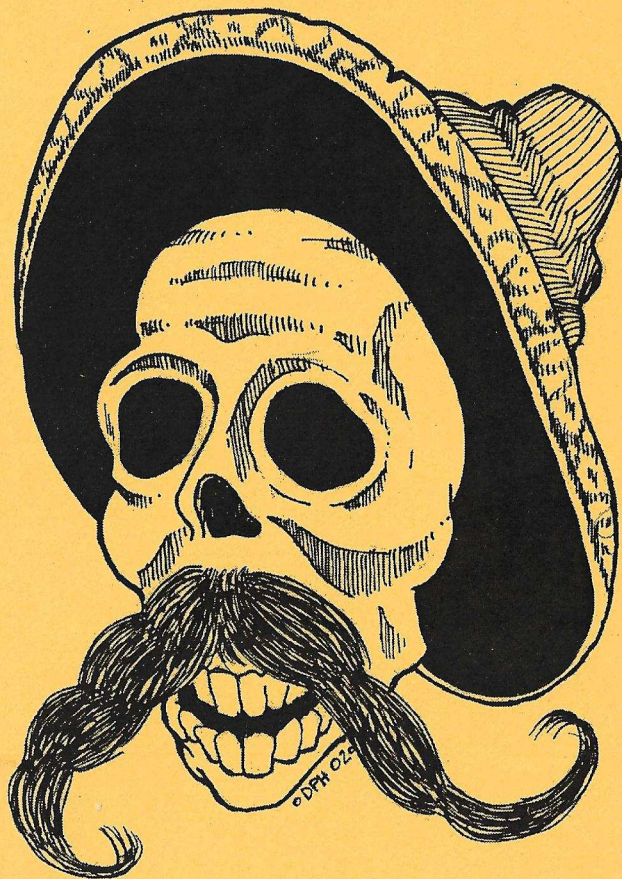
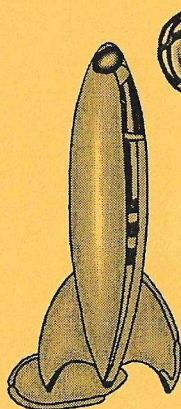


NOVACON 32



PROGRAMME BOOK



INTER ACTION

The 63rd World Science Fiction Convention
4 – 8 August 2005
Glasgow, United Kingdom

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Novacon 32
1st –3rd November 2002
The Quality Hotel, Walsall
Guest of Honour: Ian McDonald

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Committee: *Chairman* Martin Tudor; *Programme* Steve Green; *Operations* Alice Lawson; *Registrations* Steve Lawson; *Treasurer* Dave Cooper;
Publications Dave Hicks; *Secretary* Cat Coast

Staff: *Tech Ops* Nic Farey; *Art Show* Anne Green; *Dave Lally Programme* Dave Lally; *Transport* Al Johnston; *Dealers' Room* Tony Berry.

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Chairman's Introduction to Novacon 32

by *Martin Tudor*.

Despite attending twenty-two Novacons and serving on the committees of thirteen I have never been too sure exactly what should be said in the introduction to the convention Programme Book. Most of you won't get around to reading it until after the convention, so there seems little point in detailing what's in store for you, wishing you a good weekend, and so on. But, on the other hand, there might be a few newcomers out there who have yet to learn the ropes (translation: become old, tired and jaded), so I'll address my comments to them.

The main thing to remember is that, excellent though this publication is, don't waste valuable convention time reading it. I'd recommend you glance through the Programme piece by Steve Green, which puts into context some of the items you'll see this weekend. You might well need to glance at the potted Programme schedule in the centre, if you misplace your *Read Me Inside*. If this is your first time you should check out details of Novacon's charity raffle – where for the seventeenth year we will be raising money for the Royal National Institute for the Blind's "Talking Books for the Blind" project. But other than those, I'm sure your time could be spent more usefully in the bar buying drinks for my diligent committee Cat Coast (Secretary), David T. Cooper (Treasurer), Steve Green (Programme), Dave Hicks (Publications), Alice Lawson (Operations) and Steve Lawson (Registrations & Hotel Bookings). I'd thank them myself, but I'm sure it would count for more coming from *you*, especially if it is in *liquid* form...

But you should certainly read the profile of our Guest of Honour, Ian McDonald, by Maureen Kincaid Speller, as it might help you contribute some questions from the floor during Friday night's interview with Ian by Paul Kincaid. And, if you swot up on Ian's bibliography, kindly supplied by Phil Stephensen Payne, it will give you something to talk to Ian about while you're buying him a drink at sometime during the convention.

Thinking about it, I must admit you'd probably enjoy employing a few brain cells on the Novacon Quiz being run by Birmingham Science Fiction Group Chairman, Vernon Brown. After all, you might as well get some use out of them before the Black Sheep or Addlestons gets

them all. Speaking of which, while you're at the bar anyway, I'm sure our hard-working Novacon Staff members would appreciate a drink... Who? Oh, Tony Berry (Book Room & Beer Tasting), Helena Bowles & Richard Standage (Crèche), Nic Farey (Tech Ops), Ann Green (Art Show), Al Johnston (Transport), Dave Lally (the Dave Lally Programme), all of whom would greatly appreciate a kind word of thanks and a glass of cola (or something) – better make Al's a pint!

Then again, being new to all this, I'm sure the History of Novacon will interest you, as will Tony Berry's piece on the Nova Awards – which will give you a brief glimpse into the wonderful world of "fanzines". You can get a clearer idea about the strange and wondrous world of fanzine publication by sending a stamped, self addressed envelope to one of the many editors listed on the back of the Nova award Ballot form – or by picking up a fanzine or two from our Fanzine Freebie Table near the Novacon Registration Hatch.

As being surrounded by strangers is never nice, the Committee Biographies and their Novacon Memories might be a useful first step to finding out who we all are, and if you need to put a name to a number the Membership List is a good place to start!

But other than those few items, I should forget this book until after the convention. Just get out there, get to the bar, buy me a drink (pint of Black Sheep please) and have fun!

The Dream Of The Second Night

An introduction to the writings of Ian McDonald

by Maureen Kincaid Speller

I remember the first time I read Ian McDonald's *Desolation Road*. How can you resist an opening like this?

For three days Dr. Alimantando had followed the greenperson across the desert. Beckoned by a finger made from articulated runner beans, he had sailed over the desert of red grit, the desert of red stone, and the desert of red sand in pursuit of it. And each night, as he sat by his fire built of scraps of mummified wood, writing in his journals, the moonring would rise, that tumbling jewel-stream of

artificial satellites, and it would draw the greenperson out of the deep places of the desert.

Doesn't it make you want to read on, without stopping, until the very last page? It doesn't? My friend, I am sorry for you.

To me, this paragraph sums up pretty much everything I like best in science fiction, and reading or rereading the works of Ian McDonald ready for Novacon, I'm hard pressed to find a novel of his that doesn't prompt me to fall in love with science fiction all over again, or else have me snapping my fingers, groping desperately for a half-remembered thought, reference, idea. Ian McDonald is a magpie of a writer, a snapper-up of otherwise unconsidered trifles which spill out all over the place, leaving the reader tantalised, and wishing rather badly for a set of crib notes ... except that would spoil the game.

When I first read *Desolation Road* (1988), I was struck – weren't we all? – by the apparent resemblance to Ray Bradbury's *The Silver Locusts* (*The Martian Chronicles*, if you absolutely must), one of the earliest books of science fiction I ever read, and a book I adored in a totally uncritical way. There was discussion at the time *Desolation Road* came out – how close do you get before a *hommage* becomes a copy? – but rereading it, fifteen years later, I have to agree now with McDonald's entry in the Science Fiction Encyclopaedia, when it comments that he is 'appropriating deftly from other writers the precise gestures needed to make ideological or emotional points ...'.

This is not Bradbury's world. That Mars was cold, austere, nostalgic, elegiac, a world that was already dead, just biding its time until the funeral obsequies were finally over. McDonald's Mars, by comparison, looks outwards, always outwards, and is bursting with life, almost literally at times. In the space of 350-odd pages, we witness nothing more nor less than the birth and death of civilisation, all contained in *Desolation Road*, a tiny settlement that comes into being by accident, and which expands, steps briefly onto the Martian world stage to become a focus of hopes and dreams, sorrows and bitterness, and then fades away once more.

Yes, do think about Gabriel Garcia Marquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, which contains that same blend of exoticism and cruelty, and just plain weirdness, but don't get too distracted. McDonald has his own agendas; woven into the improbable life of *Desolation Road* is a fascinating portrayal of a planet long since terraformed and now

inhabited as much by cyborgs and robots as by actual flesh-and-blood people. Nothing is ever quite what it seems to be, and this is reflected as much in the bizarre carnival characters who travel the planet (more shades of Bradbury, and indeed there are echoes of his other stories, including *Something Wicked This Way Comes*) as in the extraordinary diversity of religions that have sprung up, many of them centred around modified humans. The fascination with religions will appear time and again in McDonald's work, as will a preoccupation with body modification, adaptation, posthumanity, call it what you will.

Change is a constant motif and it comes in many forms; *Out on Blue Six* (1989), for example, examines an attempt to change the world, to create the perfect society. Written at a time when Thatcherism preached the doctrine of the individual above all else, even society itself, this novel shows you exactly what you do get when you create a Compassionate Society in which every individual's whim is not only indulged but second-guessed from birth to the grave. Every aspect of society is governed by complex grading systems, allegedly ensuring that people will be given the right job, the right partner, everything to guarantee happiness. Every act, every word is measured in terms of its possible painfulness towards others, and judged accordingly. And yet, in its very 'infallibility' are contained the seeds of this world's downfall. This is not at all a deliriously happy society – for every person who fits right in and is deliriously happy, there are many people who are restless and uncertain, who hate their jobs, their assigned partners. They create alternative lives for themselves, in their dreams, in their communities or in the city under the city, or, like the Raging Apostles, bring moments of joy onto the streets with their guerrilla artistry, trying to wake up the real individuality of the people who watch them, trying to make a difference. The strange and interesting thing is that this is a thriving society, but not according to the yardsticks of the Compassionate Society itself

Our viewpoint character, Courtney Hall, a cartoonist dissatisfied with the work she's doing, embarks on a journey through this unhappy yet colourful world, to its very End and back (so many of McDonald's books are journeys; so many of his characters are wanderers, not people who stay put), meeting different people who believe they know the way to improve the world or who have rejected it entirely. Her journey is, if you like, a survey of what's on offer. And yet, in the middle of this is

the mysterious Kilimanjaro West, a man without a past, without birth, who becomes the Advocate for the human race – how often have we seen, in SF stories, humanity being given the chance to choose its destiny, and how often has this felt false and contrived? Yet here, it somehow feels right, perhaps because humankind is given the chance to pursue the messy, not always satisfying course that really does give people a chance to make a difference. And because the winners are genuinely compassionate, even those who were satisfied before things changed can be accommodated.

One thing I do particularly notice, though, and this also occurs time and again in McDonald's work, and that is the way in which, even in terrible situations, there are moments of joy. I'd never really thought about this as a possibility until I read Zamyatin's *We*, which was a direct influence on Orwell's *1984*. The latter is a book one reads like one takes medication, because it is good for one to have done so, whereas *We*, for all the bleakness of its totalitarianism, also showed the people, as individuals, manage to find small, good things in their lives. Like Zamyatin's characters, McDonald's dream their dreams, and find moments of beauty. While a lot of writers blow up the world, pull down civilisations, in black and white, with grey smoke drifting across the battlefield, McDonald does it in technicolour, with panache, and great costumes.

Take a look at *Necroville* (1994), one of my favourite McDonald novels. We're living in a society where nanotechnology has changed everything, including death. A third of the world's population consists of the resurrected dead – they form the majority of the workforce and live in a parallel culture alongside the living, in necroville. Think slavery in America, Chinese or Latin American immigrants in America, London's East End, Soweto, and you get the picture. In fact, to me, the interesting thing is the universality of this picture, the cyclical nature of it. It's 2063, everything has changed but nothing has changed at all. This time, it's the Freedead who're rising up, coming back from space, where they were shipped as indentured workers, to free their brethren on Earth. When the disaffected son of the inventor of the process which enslaved them is called Toussaint, you've more than half a clue as to what is likely to happen.

And yes, it's a bloody uprising – uprisings almost always are – but McDonald always focuses on the human, and in this case post-human,

aspect rather than opting for the impersonal. You can see that in *Desolation Road*, when Steeltown and Desolation Road are under attack. It's not about massive forces crushing the opposition, but about real people with names, and the effect that this is having on *their* lives. So, in *Necroville*, McDonald follows the fortunes of a group of friends who go into Necroville on the Day of the Dead, to fulfil a pact but also, consciously or otherwise, to find answers for that which dissatisfies them in their own extremely comfortable and privileged lives.

I found this book especially interesting the first time I read it, because of its exploration of posthumanity and the problems of immortality. I find much of the science fiction written about posthumanity and augmentation of humans puzzling, perhaps because it's predicated on the notion of 'how could you *not* want to do this?': similarly, immortality is assumed to be a Good Thing, without any real thought given as to what immortality might really mean. Posthumanity and immortality are as much about economics as about getting that extra arm and being alive for two hundred years, and it's this that I see in *Necroville*; it's a meditation on what the world is really going to be like when posthumanity is the norm. Also, McDonald remembers what I think a lot of people often forget: that these are people here, whether they're resurrected people or actually alive for the first time.

Necroville is wonderfully allusive in other ways. The novel is set on the Day of the Dead, and though the setting feels, to me at least, very Latin American – it must be the carnival (ooh, farewell to flesh ... clever!) – riding through the middle of it is a magnificent Wild Hunt, with motorbikes. How very northern European. Which neatly swings us round to *King of Morning, Queen of Day* (1991). This novel, though, is miles away from Mars, West One or Necroville, set in Ireland.

In the novel's beginning, I thought we were heading into 'early sighting of aliens' territory, though I wasn't sure how to reconcile this with Emily's sightings of fairies (all very Conan Doyle and Cottingsley). Rational science confronts irrational beliefs, perhaps, but it was hard to deny the reality of Emily's experiences, and the photos. Here, we're dealing with a rich portrayal of the fairy folklore of Ireland, which McDonald plunders mercilessly to unfold an enthralling story of three generations of women coping with a strange power that Emily has unleashed, born of her own dissatisfaction, her parents' benign neglect and the rarefied atmosphere in which she lived. Shades of *Mythago*

Wood, perhaps? No, not really ... while Rob Holdstock's characters move into the wood, McDonald's characters emerge into the urban landscape and work out their salvations there, in L'Esperanza Street, Hope Street, and as they come closer to modern times, their methods are entirely modern too. And if you think Buffy the Vampire is entirely new and original, I suggest you check out this novel first.

One begins, too, to sense that all these worlds of McDonald's fit together in ways that are not always clear initially. To take but one example, Tiresias and Gonzaga, mysterious tramps who are certainly *not* waiting for Godot but are instead straightening out the myth lines across Ireland, will reappear, in character if not name, in *Ares Express* (2001) putting that world to rights as well. I am almost certain there will be other resonances to be discovered.

Hearts, Hands and Voices (1992) might be called 'the Geoff Ryman' novel. Certainly, it tips the hat to *The Unconquered Country* and *The Child Garden*, but again, this is neither pastiche nor copy, but a calculated use of a well-established trope (think of *Heart of Darkness* as well) to tell a story. Think of it as taking a well-established shortcut to get to the heart of the story, which is as much about Ireland as about an unidentified, possibly African, country ... or about anywhere that is the subject of civil strife. But it's about Ireland, too – how could it not be when the two main religious groups are known as Proclaimers and Confessors? And again, it's about typical McDonald preoccupations, about change, constant change as the lines of battle shift and the refugees drift this way and that, and about changing the body, manipulating the stuff of life.

Many of these themes are taken up again in *Chaga* (1995), and its sequel, *Kirinya* (1998). *Chaga* is undoubtedly one of the two or three best-known of McDonald's works, and not surprising given the breadth of his vision. In many ways, this seems to me to be the apotheosis of McDonald's work, encompassing all his preoccupations with change, its benefits as well as its downside. Here, the African landscape has been transformed by an alien flora, deposited by a meteorite. Called Chaga after the first tribe to be swallowed up by it, it consumes man-made materials, and radically alters the humans it comes into contact with. But is this a bad thing? Yes, maybe, if you're from a western civilisation that sets great store by order, by possessions and the world going on unaltered. But what if the Chaga offers hope rather than

destruction? If your life has so little in it, so little to come, that to be altered is a welcome change rather than something to be feared. And this is one of the big issues at the heart of these novels, whether it's better to be conservative and to fear change, or whether it is better to go with the flow and see what's offer. It really is a matter of perspective, and about where your perspective is coming from.

And McDonald's perspective is even broader than it might at first seem. Here, the usual SF trope is 'invasion by life-changing bugs', but if those bugs are in fact someone else's terraforming devices, we're linked straight back to *Desolation Road*, and its terraformed Mars. With McDonald, there is always another side to the argument, and here the invaders are getting a taste of their own medicine.

Which is also true of *Sacrifice of Fools* (1996) the only one of McDonald's novels overtly set in Belfast, where he now lives. Set only slightly in the future, Protestant and Catholic tensions remain, but the divided community is now grappling with a new element, a community of aliens, the Shian, refugees from their own world, located to Belfast in the hopes of breaking down the formidable cultural boundaries already in place. It's a detective story – someone, something, has slaughtered an entire Shian family, and Andy Gillespie, who wants to learn and understand Shian Law, is caught up in the hunt as the human community unites against the alien, in the only way it knows how; which possibly wasn't what the authorities had in mind originally, though a cursory glance at the history of immigration shows that this is precisely what happens every time. McDonald is fond of highlighting the cyclical nature of history, and the equally cyclical failure of people to notice this.

In some respects this is one of McDonald's bleaker books; literally, it is not a colourful book, a comment which also applies to *King of Morning, Queen of Day*. It's as though monochrome must do for everyday, while colour is an alien signifier. And so we return to the red of Mars with *Ares Express*. I confess, I approached this book with some trepidation. Could it ever match *Desolation Road*? Well, of course not, because it's not the same book, its author is older, his style has changed as the years have gone by. But while the torrent of words may have slowed – early McDonald novels were apt to sweep you away in the cascade of language and the delight in its use – their impact has in no way diminished.

Ares Express is set in the future of *Desolation Road*, where huge locomotives travel the rails and a whole train-bound gypsy community has developed, fantastically hierarchical, governed by trade designations (and, god help me, reminding me curiously of Mary Norton's *Borrowers* as well). Again, there is no room for dissatisfaction, so when Sweetness runs away from her destiny as the wife of a train steward while recognising that she cannot fulfil her desire to be an engineer like her father, the world disintegrates entirely. Except that no one is entirely sure what the world is any more. The time-hopping Dr Alimantando shows Sweetness the 'reality' of a world that is being constantly remade every moment, and she comes to understand the 'reality' of a world whose very being is governed by artificial intelligence and machines that control the environment.

And that's just skimming the surface. Right now, I don't have words enough to look at the many bizarre religions that rise and fall in McDonald's novels, nor to track the many, many allusions to other science fiction works and writers – Bradbury, of course; Ryman, Ballard, Conrad; was that Gwyneth Jones over there? Blaylock? Beckett? And just about anyone who has ever written about Mars. One could spend a pleasurable lifetime unpacking McDonald's response to the science fiction genre. If, as some critics believe, the whole business of writing science fiction is a dialogue with those who went before, then Ian McDonald has taken up the challenge to build on their ideas as enthusiastically as any, and with more skill and understanding than most. His writing is rich and exciting, allusive, elusive and satisfying. Partway through *Ares Express*, Sweetness confides to Dr Alimantando that she's been eating stories, literally, to keep herself alive.

'Really? How extraordinary. Poor fare, I don't doubt. Little sustenance in most stories.'

And while, in many instances I would agree entirely with one of my favourite characters, here I have to disagree. There is a lot of sustenance in Ian McDonald's work, and I invite you to join me at the fire to listen to the stories.

Bibliography of Ian McDonald

by *Phil Stephenson-Payne*

Awards:

1989 (1988): LOCUS - Best First Novel - DESOLATION ROAD

1992 (1991): PHILIP K. DICK AWARD - KING OF MORNING, QUEEN OF DAY

1993 (1992): BSFA - Best Short Fiction - Innocents

2001: THEODORE STURGEON AWARD - Tendeléo's Story

B. Prose Fiction Books

B1. ARES EXPRESS Earthlight UK (hb) 86151-8, 5-01, 332pp, £16.99 (n/k)

Earthlight UK (pb) 03754-4, 3-02, 553pp, £.99 (Paul Youll)

extract online at <http://www.infinityplus.co.uk/stories/ares.htm>

THE BROKEN LAND {see under HEARTS, HANDS AND VOICES}

B2. CHAGA [expanded from A41; revised outtake as A34] Gollancz (hb) 06052-2,

11-95, 413pp, £16.99 (Mark Harrison); {as EVOLUTION'S SHORE} Easton Press

(hb), 2-96, 357pp; {as EVOLUTION'S SHORE} Vista (pb) 60022-5, 11-96, 413pp,

£5.99 (Harrison); Millennium (pb) 875-2, 6-99, 413pp, £6.99 (n/k)

B3. DESOLATION ROAD Bantam UK (pb) 17532-7, 2-89, 355pp, £3.99 (Les

Edwards); Drunken Dragon Press (hb) 02-1, 11-90, 373pp, £14.95 (Les Edwards)

{limited to 750 copies}; Drunken Dragon Press (hb) 52-8, 11-90, 373pp, £42.50

(Edwards) {limited to 150 numbered, leatherbound, slipcased, copies signed by

McDonald}; Earthlight UK (pb) 03753-6, 5-01, 373pp, £6.99 (Paul Youll)

B4. EMPIRE DREAMS EVOLUTION'S SHORE {see under CHAGA}

B5. HEARTS, HANDS AND VOICES Gollancz (hb) 05061-6, 3-92, 320pp,

£14.99 (Jim Burns); Gollancz (pb) 05373-9, 3-93, 320pp, £4.99 (Burns)

B6. KING OF MORNING, QUEEN OF DAY [revised & expanded from A27]

Bantam UK (pb) 40371-0, 2-92, 389pp, £4.99 (Mark Harrison)

B7. KIRINYA Gollancz (hb) 06077-8, 6-98, 412pp, £16.99 (Mick Posen)

Millennium (pb) 876-0, 6-99, 412pp, £6.99 (Mick Posen)

extract online at <http://www.infinityplus.co.uk/stories/kir.htm>

B8. NECROVILLE Gollancz (hb) 05493-X, 7-94, 319pp, £15.99 (n/k)

Easton Press (hb) , 2-95, 277pp, (n/k) {as TERMINAL CAFÉ}

Gollancz (pb) 06004-2, 7-95, 318pp, £5.99 (Chris Brown)

B9. OUT ON BLUE SIX Bantam UK (tp) 40044-4, 8-90, 335pp, £4.99 (Cormier)

B10. SACRIFICE OF FOOLS Gollancz (hb) 06075-1, 11-96, 286pp, £16.99 (Mike

Posen)

B11. SCISSORS CUT PAPER WRAP STONE Bantam Spectra (pb) 56116-2, 2-94,

133pp, \$3.99 (Stephen Youll)

B12. SPEAKING IN TONGUES Gollancz (hb) 05062-4, 9-92, 248pp, £14.99 (n/k)

Gollancz (pb) 05608-8, 10-93, 248pp, £4.99 (Jim Burns)

B13. TENDELÉO'S STORY [K7, A39] PS Publishing (hb) 12-9, 8-00, 91pp,

£35.00 (David A. Hardy) {limited to 300 numbered copies, signed by McDonald &

Silverberg}; PS Publishing (tp) 13-7, 8-00, 91pp, £12.00 (Hardy) {limited to 500

numbered copies, signed by McDonald}; Gollancz (pb) 07305-5, 3-02, 103pp, £4.99
(Jim Burns) //WATCHING TREES GROW by Peter F. Hamilton
- TERMINAL CAFÉ {see under NECROVILLE}

C. Series

C1. Chaga

CHAGA / EVOLUTION'S SHORE

KIRINYA

Tendeléo's Story

C2. Desolation Road

The Catharine Wheel

DESOLATION ROAD

Big Chair

The Luncheonette of Lost Dreams

Steam

The Five O'Clock Whistle

ARES EXPRESS

The Old Cosmonaut and the Construction Worker Dream of Mars

C3. Necroville

NECROVILLE / TERMINAL CAFÉ

The Days of Solomon Gursky

C4. Shian

The Undifferentiated Object of Desire

Legitimate Targets

Frooks

SACRIFICE OF FOOLS

F. Articles

F1. "Aliens and Other Animals: Walls, Mirrors, Pussy-Cats and Assorted Vegetables"

Focus (fnz) 9-96

F2. "Crib Notes for 'Chaga'" A MEXICON DECADE, Harris, Mexicon 6, 1994

F3. "The Last Train to Kajaído Station" DESOLATION ROAD (1991) {Bantam
Spectra edition only, as Introduction}

F4. "The Rose Backwards"

Focus (fnz) 12-93

J. Other Media

J1. KLING KLANG KLATCH {graphic novel with illustrations by David Lyttleton &
lettering by James Otis}

Gollancz (hb) 05198-1, 11-92, 80pp, \15.99 (David Lyttleton)

Gollancz (lp) 05298-8, 11-92, 80pp, \9.99 (Lyttleton)

K. Articles on Ian McDonald

K2. "Analysis: Ian McDonald's DESOLATION ROAD" by Julian R. Bills
Overspace #5, 1990

K6. "SF and the Troubles" by J

Vector (fnz) #194, 7/8-97

K7. Introduction by Robert Silverberg

TENDELÉO'S STORY (2000)

M. Items devoted to Ian McDonald

M1. Ian McDonald Information Page by Hans Persson

<http://www.lysator.liu.se/~unicorn/mcdonald/>

N. Phantom and Forthcoming Titles

N1. ANANDA

Projected sequel to CHAGA.

N2. CYBERABAD

Next contracted novel set in India one hundred years after Independence.

N3. INARTICULATE SPEECH OF THE HEART

Working title for HEARTS, HANDS AND VOICES.

N4. MORE STORIES ABOUT CITIES AND RAIN

Working title for SPEAKING IN TONGUES.

N5. STUPID SEASON

Projected mainstream novel set in Drumcree in 1998.

N6. The Other Ian McDonalds

There is a Guyanese author called Ian McDonald, one of whose stories 'Pot O' Rice Horowitz's House of Solace' is often attributed to this Ian McDonald because it was collected in an anthology of fantasy stories (WHISPERS FROM THE COTTON TREE ROOT edited by Nalo Hopkinson). There was also a "rock lyricist" in the 1960s called Ian McDonald, one of whose lyrics was collected in the fantasy anthology ELSEWHERE VOL 3 (Ace, 1984).

Q. Chronological Index of Prose Fiction (Novels in caps)

1982 The Island of the Dead

1984 The Catharine Wheel; Christian

1985 Scenes from a Shadowplay; Empire Dreams

1988 DESOLATION ROAD; EMPIRE DREAMS; King of Morning, Queen of Day;

Radio Marrakech; Unfinished Portrait of the King of Pain by Van Gogh; Visits to

Remarkable Cities; Vivaldi; Approaching Perpendicular

1989 OUT ON BLUE SIX; Listen; Gardenias; Rainmaker Cometh

1990 Fronds; Toward Kilimanjaro; Atomic Avenue; Speaking in Tongues; Winning

1991 KING OF MORNING, QUEEN OF DAY; Floating Dogs; Fragments of an

Analysis of a Case of Hysteria

1992 HEARTS, HANDS AND VOICES / THE BROKEN LAND; The Best and the

Rest of James Joyce; SPEAKING IN TONGUES; Big Chair; Brody Loved the Masai

Woman; Fat Tuesday; Innocents; The Luncheonette of Lost Dreams

1993; The Undifferentiated Object of Desire; Some Strange Desire

1994 SCISSORS CUT PAPER WRAP STONE; NECROVILLE / TERMINAL CAFÉ;

Blue Motel; Legitimate Targets

1995 Frooks; CHAGA / EVOLUTION'S SHORE; Steam; The Time Garden
 1996 Recording Angel; The Further Adventures of Baron Munchausen: The Gulf War;
 SACRIFICE OF FOOLS; Faithful; Islington
 1997 After Kerry; The Five O'Clock Whistle; Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet
 1998 The Days of Solomon Gursky; KIRINYA;
 1999 Breakfast on the Moon, with Georges
 2000 TENDELÉO'S STORY; White Noise
 2001 ARES EXPRESS
 2002 The Old Cosmonaut and the Construction Worker Dream of Mars

NOTE: The full version of this bibliography was too large to fit in the programme book. The above is therefore an extremely abridged version of Phil's vast and comprehensive original, that barely does credit to his meticulous research. Cover artist, where known, is in brackets. Phil Stephenson-Payne produces comprehensive bibliographies of many SF writers under the Galactic imprint. Check out www.philsp.com. Or write to 'Imladris' 25a Copgrove Rd, Leeds, W Yorks, LS8 2SP.

The Nova Awards

by *Tony Berry*

Created in 1973 by the late Gillon Field, the Nova Awards are presented annually by the Birmingham Science Fiction Group at Novacon for work in fanzines. At first winners were decided by committee, but now they are voted for by "informed fans". Until 1981 there was only one award for Best Fanzine, but now there are also awards for Best Fanwriter and Best Fanartist.

For a fanzine to qualify, one or more issues must have been published between 1st October 2001 and 30th September 2002. For artists and writers to qualify, a piece of their work must have been published for the first time between those dates. A "fanzine" is defined as an amateur publication which is concerned with SF/Fantasy, SF or Fantasy fans and related subjects, copies of which can be obtained in exchange for other amateur publications or for letters of comment.

The Novas are awarded by informed vote, from informed fans. These are defined as members or supporting members of Novacon who have received six or more fanzines during the relevant year. These must be different publications, not different issues of the same publication. The various official organs of a society or group do not count as different publications

Previous Winners:

1973: SPECULATION ed. Peter Weston

1974: ZIMRI ed. Lisa Conesa

1975: MAYA ed. Rob Jackson

1976: MAYA ed. Rob Jackson

1977: TWLL-DDU ed. Dave Langford

1978: GROSS ENCOUNTERS ed. Alan Dorey

1979: SEAMONSTERS ed. Simone Walsh

1980: ONE-OFF ed. Dave Bridges

YEAR	BEST FANZINE	BEST WRITER	BEST ARTIST
1981	TAPPEN ed. Malcolm Edwards	Chris Atkinson	Pete Lyon
1982	EPSILON ed. Rob Hansen	Chris Atkinson	Rob Hansen
1983	A COOL HEAD ed. Dave Bridges	Dave Bridges	Margaret Wellbank
1984	XYSTER ed. Dave Wood	Anne Hammill	D. West
1985	PREVERT ed. John Jarrold	Abi Frost	Ros Calverly
1986	PINK BEDSOCKS ed. Owen Whiteoak	Owen Whiteoak	ATom
1987	LIP ed. Hazel Ashworth	D. West	D. West
1988	LIP ed. Hazel Ashworth	Michael Ashley	D. West
1989	VSOP ed. Jan Orys	Simon Polley	Dave Mooring
1990	FTT ed. Joseph Nicholas & Judith Hanna	Dave Langford	Dave Mooring
1991	SALIROMANIA ed. Michael Ashley	Michael Ashley	D. West
1992	BOB? ed. Ian Sorensen	Michael Ashley	Dave Mooring
1993	LAGOON ed. Simon Ounsley	Simon Ounsley	Dave Mooring
1994	RASTUS JOHNSON'S CAKEWALK ed. Greg Pickersgill	Greg Pickersgill	D. West

1995	ATTITUDE ed. Michael Abbott, John Dallman & pam Wells	Simon Ounsley	D. West
1996	WAXEN WINGS & BANANA SKINS ed. Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer	Alison Freebairn	D. West
1997	BANANA WINGS ed. Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer	Mark Plummer	Sue Mason
1998	BANANA WINGS ed. Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer	Maureen Kincaid Speller	D. West
1999	BARMAID ed. Yvonne Rowse	Yvonne Rowse	Sue Mason
2000	PLOKTA ed. Alison Scott, Mike Scott, Steve Davis	Yvonne Rowse	Sue Mason
2001	HEAD ed. Doug Bell & Christina Lake	Alison Freebairn	Dave Hicks

Programme Notes

By Steve Green

Unless otherwise stated, all of Novacon 32's programme items are being held in the Oliver Cromwell Suite.

The artshow will be held on Saturday and on Sunday morning in the Sedgley, Brierley and Netherton Suites (if sufficient exhibits arrive early in the Friday afternoon, we'll try to open it in the early evening, prior to the opening ceremony).

The King Charles Suite will house the dealers' room, as well as Sunday evening's traditional beer tasting (book your tickets as soon as possible).

Finally, the Dudley Suite will feature a handful of video items, including a rare screening on Saturday morning of the recent *Doomwatch* tv movie, introduced by its author (and our guest of honour), Ian McDonald.

Friday, 1 November

7:00pm: Opening Ceremony

In which we introduce our guest of honour, Ian McDonald, as well as many of the other notable writers and artists joining us this weekend.

Please note this will be followed immediately by:

7:30pm: Guest of Honour Interview

Leading sf critic Paul Kincaid speaks to Ian McDonald about his influences, his acclaimed novels and his parallel career in films.

9:00pm: Rings Around The Earth

Our science stream opens with a presentation on the future of satellite technology by Gerry Webb, general director of Commercial Space Technologies.

10:30pm: So Not Graham Norton

Mr Norton is Irish, fashion-conscious and a succesful chatshow host. Your humble servant is none of these, but I do have two top guests, Bob Monkhouse's spare jokebook and a broomstick.

Saturday, 2 November

10:00am: Once More... With Ceiling

Fresh from their victory in San José, representatives from the Glasgow in 2005 team unveil their plans and offer you an opportunity to put your own ideas forward. No firearms allowed in the auditorium.

10:45am (Dudley Suite): I Am Peter Cushing

Or not, as the winner of this year's Delta Award at the Festival of Fantastic Films soon proves. (10 minutes)

11:00am (Dudley Suite): Doomwatch

Channel 5's brave attempt to resurrect the chilling BBC sf series, introduced by its screenwriter, Ian McDonald. (1 hour, 45 minutes)

11:30am: Book Auction

Gasp in horror as banknotes and small change are literally sucked out of your pockets and purses, to be replaced by grubby paperbacks with a rocket on the cover.

1:30pm: Glittering Prizes

Even the mass media has heard of the Hugo and Nebula Awards, but what of their lesser-known contemporaries? Representatives from the Clarke, Tiptree and White Awards discuss their aims and how each differentiates itself. (The 2002 James White Award will be presented here on Sunday.)

3:00pm: Guest of Honour Speech

His debut novel, *Desolation Road*, established Ian McDonald as one of Britain's most exciting sf authors. Here's your chance to meet him, as he celebrates the twentieth anniversary of his first sale.

4.30pm: Movie Masterbrain

Know your Terrence from your Tarkovsky, or L Q Jones from Indiana? Turn up, tune in and prepare to look smug.

6:00pm: On The Racks

Is there more perilous a venture than the launch of an sf magazine? Perhaps, but several of our panel are determined to make a success of theirs.

Please note this will be followed immediately by:

7.00pm (in the main bar): 3SF Tea Party

7.30pm: Fannish Musical

Further details appear in the *Read Me Inside*.

8:30pm: TransAtlantic Tobes

TAFF winner Tobes Valois spills the beans on those awful colonials.

9:30pm: Fan Fund Auction

Ever wanted to buy a luminous, chocolate-flavoured condom for a fiver?

No matter: The League of Fan Funds takes no prisoners.

Please note that every successful bid over £2.50 wins the bidder a Novacon raffle ticket.

Have you cast your vote for the Nova Awards yet?

10:30pm (in the main bar): Magical Mystery Tour

Our resident wizard, Ray Bradbury, practices his arcane arts from table to table. (Ray's declined a major gig tonight to join us, so please show your appreciation after the show.)

11:30pm: Disco Till You Drop

Watch fans dance like teachers, to tunes from the C&K Roadshow. Till 2:00am.

Sunday, 3 November

10:30am: Loving The Alien

An all-star cast of authors and artists discuss the joys and pitfalls of realising the unknowable.

12:30pm: Art Auction

Remember the book auction yesterday? Well, now shriek in terror as the gold fillings are wrenched free from your cavities, to be replaced by the original sketch for a grubby paperback with a rocket on the cover.

Please note that successful bidders should collect their purchases before 3:00pm.

3:00pm: I, Cyborg

Closing our science stream, Professor Kevin Warwick – head of cybernetics at the University of Reading – discusses his pioneering work in bionics and his controversial vision of humanity's future.

5:00pm: Awards Ceremony

In which we show our appreciation of our guest of honour, Ian McDonald, announce the Nova Award winners for 2002 and hint at our plans for Novacon 33.

6:00pm: James White Award

Although not technically part of the Novacon 32 programme, we are very pleased to host this year's announcement.

7:00pm (in the King Charles Suite): Celtic Beer Tasting

7:30pm (in the King Charles Suite): Celtic Cuisine

In which the committee relaxes and bids all guests and members

farewell for another twelvemonth. In honour of their victory Interaction, the 2005 World SF Convention, have donated a large amount of Scottish beer to give our beer tasting a distinctly Celtic flavour this year.

To partake of the BEER, all you need to do is bring at least THREE bottles of your favourite British or foreign beer to the convention and check them in at the Novacon Registration desk when you arrive. In return you will receive a Technicolor "BEER BADGE" which will entitle you to drink the beer at the Tasting on Sunday. Alternatively, you can also take part in the Tasting by buying a BEER BADGE for £5.00 from Novacon Registration.

The Irish Food will be served in the King Charles Suite on Sunday night from 7.30pm, but tickets (£6.00 per head) must be purchased in advance from the Novacon table before 5pm on the Sunday of the con. (In addition, from 11pm-12am the hotel will be selling a late night snack of bacon rolls to help soak up the beer!)

To compliment the Celtic theme of the Scottish Beer being supplied by Interaction, we have arranged for our (Irish) Hotel Manager to instruct his (Irish) chef to put together a special menu of food in honour of our (Irish) Guest of Honour Ian McDonald. The menu will be: Irish Stew; Boiled Bacon; Vegetarian Coddle (potatoes, vegetarian sausages and corn); Cabbage; Culcannon; Scallion Mash; Champ or Turnip and Soda Bread

Please note all timings are subject to change. Consult your *Read Me Inside*.

General Certificate of Science Fiction Education

By Vernon Brown

On the next few pages you will find a GCSE Question Paper. You should also find a loose A4 sized Answer Paper - if not please contact Registration. This is a multiple choice quiz. Each question has been given several "outline" answers, which are often abbreviated because giving them in full would make things much too easy. You have to match your answer to one of the outline ones. It's a bit like being given specifications for making a key, together with five different locks. If the key is made correctly it will fit one of the locks, if it is not it won't.

Instructions

1. Each question on the paper has several answers
2. Mark the answer that you think is correct
3. Decide which answers you will submit for marking. There are three sections - Section B is easy, Section A is medium and Section C has harder questions. You have to submit two sections which must include Section A. If you submit Sections A&B you will obtain an Ordinary Level GCSE if you pass, if you submit Sections A&C you will gain an Advanced Level GCSE if you pass. Pass mark is 40% and each certificate is graded.
4. Having decided which sections to submit ignore the other one.
5. The answer paper has lettered and numbered squares that correspond to the questions and answers on the question paper. Carefully BLOCK OUT with black or blue ink, ballpoint or felt tip the squares corresponding to your chosen answers. Do not circle, cross or otherwise mark the squares, or use pencil because the marking system cannot cope with anything else and your paper will be rejected. If you make a mistake put a large X through the incorrect square.
6. Block out the square corresponding to the sections you are submitting i.e. A&B or A&C and print your name and address, which will be used as an address label if you do not collect your certificate during NOVACON.
7. Post your answer paper in the GCSE box at REGISTRATION on SATURDAY evening by 6.00pm but watch the GCSE posters for any alteration to this deadline.
8. All answer papers submitted will be entered into a free draw.
9. Collect your certificate from me on Saturday evening/Sunday and find out whether you have also won a book voucher.
10. Finally, no one else will know how you have done unless you tell them, so please have a go, you may do better than you think.

SECTION A

1. "Tiger Tiger" has what other title?
(a)SIASL (b)EA (c)TSMD (d)F (e)TTM
2. Shakespeare's 'Tempest' is the basis for what film?
(a)Z (b)FG (c)BR (d)FP (e)M
3. Lord D'Arcy and Master Sean are characters in whose books?
(a)ADF (b)RG (c)KR (d)GS (e)BP

4. "Lest Darkness Fall" is a novel based on ?
(a)Nuclear War (b)Time Travel (c)The Moon (d)Invasion
5. How many names has God?
(a)I million (b)9 million (c)1 billion (d)9 billion
6. What,roughly,is the gravity at Mesklins equator?
(a)1 (b)4 (c)40 (d)400 (e)570
7. Who was the "Maid of Mars"?
(a)Pluvium (b)Thuvia (c)Thora (d)Mycia (e)Vai
8. With what did Susan Calvin work?
(a)Aliens (b)Genes (c)Robots (d)Timetravel (e)Whales
9. What is considered to be the first true SF magazine?
(a)BBM (b)AS (c)ASF (d)F&SF (e)WT
10. What was ANALOG called before it became ANALOG?
(a)BBM (b)AS (c)ASF (d)F&SF (e)WT
11. On what short story was "2001:A Space Odyssey" based?
(a)CE (b)ETE (c)FP (d)TS (e)TT
12. In "The Time Machin"(Film 1960)with what did the Time Traveller return to the future?
(a)Books (b)Lights (c)Medicine (d)Tools (e)Weapons
13. In which novel do people jaunte?
(a)AA (b)FF (c)NN (d)TT (e)YY
14. What is a well known sign of madness in Piersons Puppeteers?
(a)Courage (b)Depression (c)Laughter (d)Silence (e)Tears
15. What number or letter precedes the name Daneel Olivaw?
(a)1 (b)6 (c)A (d)R (e)U
16. Name the "Island in the Sea of Time"?
(a)Ceylon (b)Cuba (c)Dogs (d)Nantucket (e)Tasmania
17. Jetan is a form of Martian ?
(a)Chess (b)Fencing (c)Food (d)Music (e)Politeness
18. In Shelley's novel (1818) who was Frankenstein?
(a)Assistant (b)Heroine (c)Monster (d)Scientist (e)Valet

SECTION B

19. In White's "Sector General" novels what do 4-letter codes denote?
(a)Eras (b)Beings (c)Languages (d)Planets (e)Craft
20. In which novel do firemen burn books?
(a)C100 (b)THX401 (c)F451 (d)R80 (e)K400
21. Which author created slow glass?
(a)BA (b)HGW (c)JV (d)BS (e)SD

22. Who wrote the novel "On The Beach"?
(a)GH (b)NS (c)JB (d)ER (e)ERB
23. Who organised the first Novacon?
(a)ASFG (b)BSFA (c)BSFG (d)LC (e)OUSFG
24. In "The Time Machine" (HGW) who are the underground dwellers?
(a)Eloi (b)Gnurr (c)Morlocks (d)Troggs (e)Vir
25. Who originated the term "Robot"?
(a)Aldiss (b)Asimov (c)Capek (d)Simak (e)Wells
26. In which comic did Dan Dare first appear?
(a)Beano (b)Eagle (c)Lion (d)Swift (e)Tiger
27. Who invented the 3 Laws Of Robotics?
(a)ACC (b)IA (c)HH (d)KL (e)RUR
28. A triffid is a/an?
(a)Bird (b)Fish (c)Lizard (d)Vegetable (e)Worm
29. How many leagues under the sea did JV write about?
(a)5,000 (b)10,000 (c)20,000 (d)30,000 (e)50,000
30. Who wrote "War Of The Worlds"?
(a)ERB (b)CD (c)MS (d)JV (e)HGW
31. What was the computer's name in "2001: A Space Odyssey"?
(a)Gork (b)HAL9000 (c)Norby (d)Robby (e)XT5
32. On which dark planet are Anne McCaffery's "Dragon" stories set?
(a)Darkover (b)Dune (c)New Terra (d)Odyssey (e)Pern
33. IN "Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy" who was the robot?
(a)Ernie (b)Grot (c)Hal (d)Marvin (e)Sam

SECTION C

19. The film "Destination Moon" was based on whose story?
(a)WVB (b)RAH (c)SL (d)FL (e)HGW
20. In which decade was the term "robot" coined?
(a)1900s (b)1910s (c)1920s (d)1930s (e)1940s
21. Who wrote the If-World novel "What Mad Universe"?
(a)FB (b)JB (c)HH (d)IA (e)FL
22. Who was Chesney Bonestell?
(a)Artist (b)Author (c)Critic (d)Editor (e)Publisher
23. What is regarded as the first SF film epic was made by?
(a)LB (b)RC (c)FL (d)FM (e)GM
24. The Magic Mimeograph has at the handle a/an?
(a)A (b)BNF (c)E (d)FF (e)TF

25. A Hoka (Anderson/Dickson) is?
(a)Canoid (b)Feloid (c)Octopoid (d)Reptiloid (e)Ursinoid
26. "Odd John" was written by?
(a)JH (b)MF (c)OS (d)RK (e)SM
27. Jules Verne's last published SF story was first published in?
(a)1870s (b)1900s (c)1930s (d)1960s (e)1990s
28. How did Slans differ physically from humans?
(a)Forked Tongue (b)Thumbless (c)Tendrils (d)Tentacles
29. Where was the first formally planned SF convention held?
(a)Boston (b)Leeds (c)London (d)New Orleans (e)Paris
30. Which SF artist designed the Skylab 1 patch?
(a)CF (b)DH (c)FF (d)KF (e)KT
31. In "A Martian Odyssey" (SGW) what is the Martian's name?
(a)Black (b)Dravit (c)G'ruth (d)Toiler (e)Tweel
32. In "Way Station" (S) what did Enoch Wallace become?
(a)Alien (b)Immortal (c)King (d)Strong (e)Telepathic
33. Which of the following H Beam Piper stories is not SF?
(a)APFT (b)FDP (c)MITGR (d)O (e)SV

Novacon and the R.N.I.B.

You'll notice raffle tickets are on sale throughout the weekend for prizes beyond the dreams of avarice. These are in aid of our regular good cause, the RNIB. Novacon has supported the Royal National Institute for the Blind's *Talking Books* project since Novacon 18 in 1988, when it was suggested by then chairman Tony Berry and we've raised funds for a number of books since then. Last year we raised £223.45, so dig deep when you see Anne Woodford and her book of tickets and buy as many as you can afford!

Remembering Novacons

by the committee

I asked the committee for a few short words about their memories and experiences of Novacon. Two or three hundred words would be fine, I said. Apparently there is some clause in the constitution of the BSFG that allows the chairman to write 1,700...

Steve Green Novacon 7 wasn't my first convention - Fantasycon III holds that distinction by nine months - but certainly the first where I felt truly at home. It was the relaxed mix of fans and professionals, although the dividing lines were often blurred, a fact reflected in the programme then and ever since.

I've missed just one Novacon in the quarter-century since, whilst recuperating from chairing Novacon 14 (I'm continually amazed by the enthusiasm and sheer bloody-mindedness of serial chairs such as Martin Tudor), but I was still on the phone immediately afterwards to hear all the gossip. (At the time, I was arguing in print that only the introduction of a biennial schedule would rescue Novacon and the Brum Group from creative and logistical burn-out, which just goes to prove how wrong you can be. That said, my alternative suggestion - that the Brum Group appoint chairs at the previous year's agm, rather than ratifying them just ten months ahead - remains logical.)

Will I still be attending Novacon in another twenty-five years? Probably, so long as I haven't proven to have a shorter expiry date than an event which has already outlasted the Berlin Wall, five prime ministers and Britain's best science fiction bookshop.

Alice Lawson My first Novacon was Novacon 18 in 1988. It was the Royal Angus. I remember going out for a meal with the Sheffield crowd. (We were a crowd then) The fog was the thickest I have ever seen. I never believed that you could get lost in a city centre, about 30 yards from the hotel We decided to head towards a bright light, and ended in a restaurant having an amazing Chinese meal. Another Novacon another meal, we decided to go and find the same place. We found, we had a great meal; we went back to the hotel. A few days later John Dowd got a phone call from his credit card company asking if he was in Hong Kong. He wasn't but his card details were.

Over the years there has been lots of great fun leading to lots of great memories. Who can forget Geoff Ryman's Gilgamesh. Or Bernie Evans as Queen Victoria, although I don't think there was much acting involved there. Bernie and Novacon are mainly responsible for me getting into con running. My first committee was Novacon 20 It's all her fault and don't think I haven't spent the last 12 years trying to get her back.

Dave Cooper My first Novacon was 17, a year before Alice. I have many memories of Novacon – haven't we all? But there are three that stick in my mind. Working backwards –

A significant memory was introducing my wife, Jane to the real Bob Shaw, who was slightly the worst for wear, in the lift at the Chamberlain. I can't remember the conversation, but Jane got to meet one of my favourite authors not long before he left us.

My first committee post was as treasurer of Novacon 21 – one of those held at the airport. I can't remember why we thought fancy dress for the committee was a good idea for the Friday night, I ended up in an Edwardian gentleman's bathing cossie. The costume of the evening went to Bernie Evans who was dressed as Queen Victoria – those of you who know Bernie know how apt that was!

Back to one of my earliest Novacons, back at the Angus in the eighties. It was a tradition in those days for the Sheffield SF Group to go out on the Saturday night for a Chinese meal. This particular Saturday was foggy, a real pea-souper – no one was out except for us. We got to the restaurant and we were the only customers. The waiter if we would let chef produce something special for us, he asked us for a price per head and chef produced some fantastic dishes – full of stuff you just don't get on standard menus including a whole dover sole!

Cat Coast My first convention was also my first Novacon, 21, in 1990 at the Excelsior. While I was in the bar, I met a man called Gamma who gave me a lollypop. I'd never before met anyone who'd been up for a week, drinking; not even at art college. Later, I went to a debate about TAFF, where a certain Mr Pickersgill seemed agin it, and wasn't afraid to say so. Somebody in the audience quietly remarked that two of the panellists, Lillian Edwards and Christina Lake, were reminiscent of six-year-old twins. Others in the audience seemed to find this disproportionately funny. On Friday I went to bed at 8.15 pm and slept for twenty hours.... At the end of the convention, the GoH Professor Jack Cohen was presented with a rock. I'd never before seen somebody pleased at being given a rock, not even at art college. I also learned one of life's important lessons – breakfast on Monday morning is earlier than at the weekend, so one should shift one's bottom in order to avoid disappointment.

Dave Hicks At a non-fannish barbecue this summer I met an old friend, Stuart, from (amongst other things) my days at the Harrow College SF Group. Back in the early eighties he'd come to a few conventions with me and asked after people in fandom we'd known. He used particularly to enjoy Novacon. "So," he said, "who's running it these days?" He ran through a list of our old fannish acquaintances, finally choking on his malt whisky and exclaiming: "You? You....YOU?!"

It was different back then, at my first Novacon, 11, and the few thereafter I attended in my youth. *I* was different back then. Not for me the stupid game shows, oh no. Except wasn't that me pouring a whole pint of beer over my head in the middle Green and Clarke's BOLLOCK BUSTERS quiz back in 1983? Not for me the fannish mischief. Although wasn't it me, along with Kevin Clarke, Pete Wright and Stuart who convinced a gentleman of the road we encountered late in Birmingham city centre that we were a band, SIDEREAL ZOO? We signed and gave him a 'back stage pass' for our next gig, but never heard if anyone was arrested for trying to get into the Birmingham Odeon for free clutching an old bus ticket. And I was quite definitely on the other side of the room sipping a shandy and reading something improving when the Concrete Overcoat Fan Fund was dreamed up. Ironically, its sole purpose was for Steve Green to win it. He never did, instead fans decided to use it as a *real* un-popularity vote, causing *real* trouble. Nah, that can't have been me.

I didn't feel like a "proper" SF fan back then, though. Fandom seemed to belong to other people, and was something I used occasionally and put away again. It's only two decades and a dozen Novacons on that I realise *everything* that happens in fandom is pretty much cooked up in moments of madness or inspiration, that *everybody* is working on their own crackpot schemes, quietly plotting to reform the Novas, organise conventions or send Tobes to America late into the night at the convention bar.

Oh, you're not? Well, you would say that, wouldn't you?

Steve Lawson I'm not sure that I can remember now, as I look back over the many years that separate the really young neo that used to be me, exactly which was my first Novacon, I'm pretty sure it was at the Royal Angus Hotel, but that really doesn't narrow it down very

much. I remember that I was in the overflow hotel, then called the Penguin Hotel, now of course better known as the Britannia Hotel, there was the noise of all the starlings as I walked back to the hotel past the Cathedral, that made a big impression, of course it was 4am and I had expected it would be quieter.

As for the convention itself, I have vague memories of a rather disturbing film with lots of odd imagery, it made me feel rather ill and I had to go out into the corridor and lie down, or it could have been the beer. I always used to have a problem with Friday nights at Novacon, I couldn't always get the Friday off and so arrived straight from work and jumped right into the con, this usually meant drinking at pub speed rather than con speed and ending up rather pissed. I was well known for hardly ever seeing Saturday mornings and sometimes afternoons as well. Of course, I now have no such problem, mainly because I make sure to get holiday around the con.

On the whole I think it was Novacon 10.

Anyway, I've made a lot of friends at Novacons and wouldn't have missed any of them.

Martin Tudor. As I've attended 22 Novacons and worked on the committees of 13 of them coming up with just a few hundred words on my Novacon memories was quite difficult. A few thousand no trouble... But as brevity is what Dave wants, I'll try. [He failed. Ed.]

One of the highlights has got to be Geoff Ryman's performance of his play *Gilgamesh* at Novacon 19 way back in 1989.

As chairman I'd been instrumental in convincing Geoff that even though no Novacon had previously staged a professional theatrical production, we could. Most vitally, that we could raise enough money to stage it.

Novacon had been forced out of Birmingham by increasingly expensive hotels and the Excelsior by the airport was *not* proving a popular choice! Membership was 150 down on the same time the previous year and things were looking desperate, when I managed to persuade W. H. Smiths in Birmingham to sponsor the production, and the Hippodrome to let us have their old curtain for next to nowt! Phew.
19:30 The Epic of *Gilgamesh*

Doors open 19:15. An original dramatic presentation written for Novacon by Geoff Ryman. Once the performance has started please

do not leave your seat until the interval. No one will be allowed to enter the Programme Room when this item is under way.

It is the Saturday night of the con and after three months of hard work it is actually going to happen, I'm shaking with excitement. It is gradually dawning on me that all of the committee and all of our gophers want to watch Gilgamesh. But, of course, there are a number of die-hard drinkers in the bar who haven't pulled themselves away in time – someone has to guard the door, *outside* of the hall....

Yup. It was me. I got to stand outside and miss the dramatic presentation of Gilgamesh by Geoff and his Indian dancer and musician. I hear it was very good though.

The joys of being Chairman eh?

It remains one of the high points of the Novacons I've attended because as the audience piled out afterwards the buzz was incredible! I coasted on that buzz for weeks after. Thanks Geoff.

So that was a high point, low points? There have been a few, but the *lowest* is *very* hard to forget – it was way back in 1985 at Novacon 15.

That was the first year we used the De Vere in Coventry, I was Hotel Liaison and (as it turned out) 24-hour security for the weekend. Back in those days Novacon regularly had between 400 and 500 attendees, easily filling most hotels and so the management turned a blind eye to a few fans dossing in the 24-hour film show on the Saturday night. This meant that students could attend without worrying about cost of a hotel room – by the time they'd partied until 4am and "watched" a film for a couple of hours it was time to start attending the programme again. The hotel didn't mind so long as they were discrete – the bedrooms were full, so they weren't losing out.

However, 1985 was the year that Cymrucon was cancelled at the last moment. It was a strange convention, held in a *really* run down hotel in Cardiff, which boasted 24-hour bar, gaming and films throughout the weekend. By "gaming" I'm not talking about a few people quietly sitting around a table shaking dice – we're talking numerous drunken adolescents playing something called, I think, "Killer". This seemed to involve scores of lunatics charging up and down hotel corridors screaming at each other for hours on end!

Even the drunken debauchery of one of Kev Clarke and Steve Green's infamous Novacon Game Shows looked sedate by comparison.

Cymrucons and Novacons were different cons with only the smallest amount of crossover and that was the way it should've stayed.

But in 1985, at the last minute, Cymrucon was cancelled and with no where else to go a large number of Cymrucon people came to Novacon – they didn't bother booking...

In the run up to Novacon I never seem to get much sleep, especially not when we're breaking in a new hotel – there's always some last minute details to tie up which involve rewriting contracts or drafting letters in the early hours or some such vital matters getting in the way of a few *zzzzs*. So, by the time I arrived at the De Vere I wasn't feeling exactly refreshed.

Matters were not helped by Phil Probert, the Chairman, who seemed to be having hysterics about *everything* and within hours of the con starting had already alienated *all* of the dealers! But Phil was always highly strung so I tried to tune out his hysteria and get on with the other 1001 things which were going wrong. Tony Berry wasn't happy with his Alternative programme room; the layout of the hotel was confusing everyone; the hotel were concerned about large numbers of scruffy characters wandering in with sleeping bags slung over their shoulders (what?!); the usual problems, but eventually we got it sorted and people settled down to having fun. Yeah, fun.

As the De Vere was a big hotel, spread out across a wide area. As Hotel Liaison I'd been issued with a pager – never again. The thing never stopped bleeping. From 11pm Friday I started getting reports of idiots charging up and down the bedroom corridors blasting each other with water pistols – by the I'd got there they were long gone, but the Duty Manager wanted it sorted as they were getting complaints from people trying to sleep – some with young children. Then he told me that I should check out the main programme hall, because if the half-dozen bodies in sleeping bags weren't gone in half an hour he'd have to notice them. I told them to put there bags away and go *watch the film*. An hour or so later the Manager wants me to check the bar (which had closed). Then the lounge then the corridor by the alternative programme. Then it was Saturday morning and I had a load of problems to sort in the book room, then the film programme, then the bar had closed for no reason and someone had wrecked a wardrobe and someone had pulled a pay phone off a wall and then it was Saturday night and the lunatics were shooting each other again and the sleeping

bags were popping up everywhere and on and on it went all through Sunday morning and endless arguments with the Chairman. Then it was the awards ceremony and the Chairman won COFF and then he, his wife who was Publications and his sister-in-law the person in charge of the Art Show all resigned and then it was Sunday night and it all started again.

And, finally, I gave up. It was 6am Monday and I needed some sleep, I told the Manager to throw into the street anyone he caught in a sleeping bag and I went to my room to get a couple of hours sleep. The remaining committee were supposed to be having breakfast with our Guests of Honour, Jim White and Dave Langford. My roommate woke me at 8am and I staggered into the bathroom and then Tony Berry materialised in the bathroom and I'm sitting half-naked on the bog with a crowd of people in the doorway of the bathroom.

My roommate had panicked as I hadn't answered him for half an hour and gone and fetched our resident Master Locksmith who'd popped the bathroom lock...

I'm sure it is a vision which will haunt Tony to his dying day.

Yeah, I made it to breakfast – I don't think I was particularly good company though!

The History of Novacon

CON YEAR ATTENDANCE	HOTEL	GUEST(S) OF HONOUR COMMITTEE	CHAIR
1 1971 (144)	Imperial Centre Ray Bradbury; Alan Denham; Alan Donnelly; Pauline Dungate	James White	Vernon Brown
2 1972 (144)	Imperial Centre Stan Eling; Jeffrey Hacker; Richard Newnham; Meg Palmer; Hazel Reynolds	Doreen Rogers	Pauline Dungate
3 1973 (146)	Imperial Centre Stan Eling; Gillon Field; Meg Palmer; Geoff Winterman	Ken Bulmer	Hazel Reynolds
4 1974 (211)	Imperial Centre Stan Eling; Gillon Field; Pauline Dungate; Robert Hoffman; Arline Peyton; Rog Peyton; Hazel Reynolds	Ken Slater	Dr Jack Cohen

- 5 *Royal Angus* *Dan Morgan* *Rog Peyton*
1975 Ray Bradbury; Pauline Dungate; Robert Hoffman;
(272) Arline Peyton; Laurence Miller
- 6 *Royal Angus* *David Kyle* *Stan Eling*
1976 Helen Eling; Rog Peyton
(317) Arline Peyton; Laurence Miller
- 7 *Royal Angus* *John Brunner* *Rog Peyton*
1977 Liese & Martin Hoare; Ian & Janice Maule; Dave Langford
(278)
- 8 *Holiday Inn* *Anne McCaffrey* *Laurence Miller*
1978 Dave Holmes; Kathy Holmes; Chris Walton;
(309) Jackie Wright
- 9 *Royal Angus* *Christopher* *Rog Peyton*
 Priest
1979 Helen Eling; Stan Eling; Chris Morgan; Pauline Morgan;
(290) Paul Oldroyd
- 10 *Royal Angus* *Brian W. Aldiss* *Rog Peyton*
1980 Joseph Nicholas; Keith Oborn; Krystyna Oborn; Paul Oldroyd;
(495) Chris Walton
- 11 *Royal Angus* *Bob Shaw* *Paul Oldroyd*
1981 Helen Eling; Stan Eling; Joseph Nicholas; Phil Probert
(362)
- 12 *Royal Angus* *Harry Harrison* *Rog Peyton*
1982 Chris Baker; Dave Hardy; Eunice Pearson; Phil Probert
(373)
- 13 *Royal Angus* *Lisa Tuttle* *Phil Probert*
1983 Chris Donaldson; Eunice Pearson; Steve Green; Dave Haden;
(339) Jan Huxley; Paul Oldroyd; Paul Vincent; John Wilkes
- 14 *Grand* *Robert Holdstock* *Steve Green*
1984 Kevin Clarke; Ann Green; Dave Haden; Eunice Pearson;
(333) Phil Probert; Martin Tudor; Paul Vincent
- 15 *De Vere* *James White* *Phil Probert*
 Dave Langford
1985 Tony Berry; Carol Pearsons; Eunice Pearson; Graham Poole;
(343) Martin Tudor
- 16 *De Vere* *E. C. Tubb* *Tony Berry*
 Chris Evans
1986 Nick Mills; Darroll Pardoe; Rosemary Pardoe; Graham Poole;
(257) Maureen Porter
- 17 *Royal Angus* *Iain M. Banks* *Bernie Evans*
1987 Mick Evans; Dave Hardy; Graham Poole;
(321) Stephen Rogers; Geoff Williams

- 18 *Royal Angus* **Garry Kilworth** **Tony Berry**
 1988 Bernie Evans; Rog Peyton; Greg Pickersgill; Linda Pickersgill;
 (336) Martin Tudor
- 19 *The Excelsior* **Geoff Ryman** **Martin Tudor**
 1989 Tony Berry; Helena Bowles; Bernie Evans; Nick Mills;
 (303) Pam Wells
- 20 *The Excelsior* **Dr Jack Cohen** **Bernie Evans**
 1990 Al Johnston; Alice Lawson; Steve Lawson; Richard Standage;
 (330) Nick Mills
- 21 *Forte Post House* **Colin Greenland** **Nick Mills**
(ex-Excelsior)
 1991 David T Cooper; Bernie Evans; Al Johnston; Alice Lawson;
 (200) Steve Lawson; Chris Murphy
- 22 *Royal Angus* **Storm Constantine** **Helena Bowles**
 1992 Tony Berry; Bernie Evans; Jenny Glover; Steve Glover;
 (300) Carol Morton; Richard Standage
- 23 *Royal Angus* **Stephen Baxter** **Carol Morton**
 1993 Helena Bowles; Bernie Evans; Tony Morton; Richard Standage
 (244)
- 24 *Royal Angus* **Graham Joyce** **Richard**
Standage
 1994 Helena Bowles; Sarah Freakley; Tony Morton; Carol Morton;
 (214) Chris Murphy; Martin Tudor
- 25 *The Chamberlain* **Brian W. Aldiss** **Tony Morton**
Harry Harrison
Bob Shaw
(Special Guest: Iain M. Banks)
 1995 Tony Berry; Carol Morton; Chris Murphy; Richard Standage;
 (343) Martin Tudor
- 26 *The Ibis* **David Gemmel** **Carol Morton**
 1996 Sarah Freakley; Tony Morton; Richard Standage;
 (281) Chris Murphy; Martin Tudor
- 27 *The Abbey* **Peter F. Hamilton** **Martin Tudor**
(Great Malvern)
 1997 Carol & Tony Morton; Chris Murphy; Mike Siddall
 (277)
- 28 *Britannia* **Paul J. McAuley** **Martin Tudor**
 1998 Carol & Tony Morton; Chris Murphy; Steve Lawson;
 (265) Pat McMurray
- 29 *Britannia* **Ian Stewart** **Carol Morton**
 1999 Chris Murphy; Steve Lawson; Pat McMurray; Tony Morton;
 (242) Maureen Kincaid Speller; Martin Tudor

30	Britannia	Chris Priest	Tony Berry
	Special Guest	Rog Peyton	
	Guest Artist	David A. Hardy	
2000	Chris Murphy; Steve Lawson; Pat McMurray; David T Cooper;		
(224)	Maureen Kincaid Speller; Martin Tudor		
31	Quality	Gwyneth Jones	Tony Berry
	(Walsall)		
2001	Alice & Steve Lawson; Martin Tudor; David T Cooper;		
(219)	Dave Hicks; Cat Coast		
32	Quality	Ian McDonald	Martin Tudor
	(Walsall)		
2002	Alice & Steve Lawson; Steve Green; David T Cooper;		
(252)	Dave Hicks; Cat Coast		

NOTE: All hotels were in Birmingham unless otherwise stated. Incomplete data means that, for the sake of consistency, attendance figures are from programme books as they went to press, and are some way short of *actual* numbers attending each convention. For example final membership of Novacon 17 was 352 (not 321). Similarly, Novacon 18 was in fact 411; Novacon 19 was 426; Novacon 23 was 350 and Novacon 31 was 242.

The Birmingham Science Fiction Group

By Rog Peyton

Someone asked "What does the Brum Group do besides organising NOVAACON?" The answer has been the same for 32 years. Since July 1971, the Group has organised a monthly meeting - at one time on the third Friday of the month but now on the second Friday. Over the years we've been visited by both of our Honorary Presidents, Brian Aldiss and Harry Harrison many times, plus dozens of authors, editors, artists and other professionals in the field. Douglas Adams, Isaac Asimov, Frank Herbert, Anne McCaffrey, Larry Niven, Terry Pratchett, Christopher Priest, Bob Shaw, Theodore Sturgeon - to name just a few - have all visited the Group and given talks.

Since the last NOVAACON we've had a panel discussion (November) within the group, "Ask the Experts" where selected group members embarrassed themselves by trying to answer questions they SHOULD have known the answers to.

Our Christmas Social in December was the always-popular visit to a local hostelry with good food, good beer and a 9-pin skittle alley, where we were joined by members of the Birmingham University SF Group. A good time was had by all with several people winning prizes (mainly booze and chocolates).

This year we will be doing the same but at a new venue - the Lighthouse in Halesowen. Tickets are £10 which includes hot food and a coach back to Birmingham city centre. Anyone wanting a ticket should see Vernon or Pat Brown this weekend, or see me in the Book Room. Tickets are limited so don't delay.

January saw the Annual General Meeting where last year's committee was beaten and kicked into submission until they screamed those magic words "I volunteer!"

Top SF artist Fred Gambino was our guest speaker in February and we were treated to a slide show and commentary on some superb pieces of, mainly, book cover artwork.

Local talent has always featured high in our list of visitors, and this year was no exception with talks by horror author Joel Lane in March, husband and wife fantasy/SF authors Anne Gay and Stan Nicholls in April, editor and author Mike Chinn in July and comics writer Ian Edginton in October.

May should have also have been a talk by local talent - namely Peter Weston, fresh back from being fan Guest of Honour at Jersey. But at the last minute he discovered he'd double booked and would be in Belgium visiting his daughter Alison. At VERY short notice Brum Group Chairperson Vernon Brown and myself filled in by giving a talk on the history of conventions in the UK filled with anecdotes about events and various fans' embarrassing exploits. If YOU hear rumours about yourself, it wasn't us!

New fantasy writer Juliet E McKenna came to visit in June and talked about the problems of getting published, how SHE got published and other aspects of a writer's life.

Editor and fan Liz Holliday came along in September to tell us about the new SF magazine, 3SF, which is launching this month. Hopefully copies of Issue 1 will be ready for NOVAcon so don't miss out on grabbing this premier issue. Only £3.50.

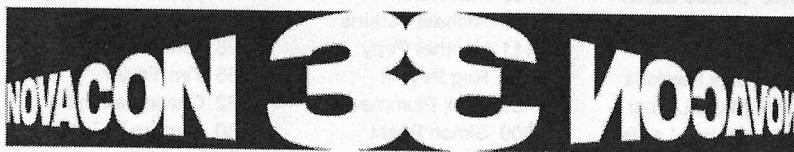
Novacon 32 Members

at 20th October 2002

1 Ian McDonald	147 Jonathan Cain	239 Sabine Furlong
2 Martin Tudor	174 Diane Capewell	240 Karen Furlong
3 David T. Cooper	173 Stuart Capewell	238 Nigel Furlong
4 Steve Lawson	161 Elaine Coates	246 Victor Gonzalez
5 Alice Lawson	166 Mike Coble	68 Niall Gordon
6 Dave Hicks	252 Eddie Cochrane	13 Wendy Graham
7 Cat Coast	89 Noel Collyer	9 Ann Green
8 Steve Green	202 Graham Cooling	10 Dave Hardy
	137 Jane Cooper	221 Colin Harris
	110 Steve Cooper	84 John Harvey
85 Michael Abbott	108 Del Cotter	83 Eve Harvey
127 Jae Leslie Adams	184 Dave Cox	51 Julian Headlong
54 Andrew A. Adams	93 Enid Crowe	247 Anders Hedenlund
11 Brian Ameringen	28 Arthur Cruttenden	21 Martin Hoare
138 Jim Anderson	210 Tony Cullen	66 Andrew Hobson
172 Agnes Andrews	152 Debbie Custance	65 Sue Hobson
171 Graham Andrews	183 Julia Daly	205 MaryAnn
87 Margaret Austin	153 Al Darragh	250 Claire Farrell
244 Karen Babich	168 Glenn Davidson	249 Dave Holmes
179 James Bacon	159 Brian Davies	222 Anders Holmström
132 Iain Banks	103 Teresa Davies	218 Simon Hovell
70 Barbara-Jane	107 Malcolm Davies	233 Thomas Ibbs
165 Jim Barker	73 Steve Davies	232 Michael Ibbs
27 Chris Bell	311 Martyn Dawe	230 Tony Ibbs
119 Doug Bell	16 Peter Day	31 Richard James
14 Austin Benson	72 Giulia De Cesare	163 Ben Jeapes
164 Tracy Benton	29 Simon Dearn	194 Steve Jeffery
95 Tony Berry	117 Vincent Docherty	140 Andy Jenkins
133 B. A. Blackburn	58 Chris Donaldson	141 Janet Jenkins
220 Sandra Bond	74 Paul Dormer	97 Al Johnston
99 Helena Bowles	207 Fran Dowd	125 Jonathan Jones
178 Carol Bradbury	206 John Dowd	251 Gwyneth Jones
101 Ray Bradbury	129 Tara Dowling-Hussey	227 Steve Jones
24 Simon Bradshaw	44 Stephen Dunn	47 Tony Keen
25 Bridget Bradshaw	88 Martin Easterbrook	112 William Keith
55 Claire Brialey	160 Lilian Edwards	193 Richard Kennaway
187 Chris Brooks	39 Lynn Edwards	198 Leigh Kennedy
40 Vernon Brown	79 Sue Edwards	243 Shane Kerlin
142 Tanya Brown	50 Tim Evans	134 Debra Kerr
41 Pat Brown	98 Nic Farey	20 Paul Kincaid
26 Roger Burton West	217 Janet Figg	223 Linda Krawecka
170 Caitriona Byrne	216 Mike Figg	115 David Laight
145 Steven Cain	78 Susan Francis	120 Christina Lake
146 Marianne Cain	37 Gwen Funnell	96 Dave Lally

156 Colin P. Langeveld	219 Sue Oliver	105 Mike Stone
67 Dave Langford	231 Joan Paterson	209 June Strachan
242 Sinead Larkin	63 Mali Perera	143 Marcus Streets
46 Erhard Leder	175 Michael Perkins	90 Neil Summerfield
195 Vikki Lee	111 Heather Petty	128 Jennifer Swift
104 Max Hawkida	157 Rog Peyton	155 Tim Taylor
196 Maria Leitner	56 Mark Plummer	182 Calvin Ternent
126 Sharon Lewis	200 Simon Priest	180 George F. Ternent
245 Sheila Lightsey	199 Elizabeth Priest	181 Linda Ternent
34 Gavin Long	17 Liam Proven	61 David Thomas
33 Caroline Loveridge	154 James Randall	18 Kirsty Thunem
30 Peter Mabey	177 Danielle Ray	76 Neil Tomkinson
186 Keith Martin	114 Peter Redfarn	248 Rachel Tomkinson
213 Sue Mason	191 Patrik Reutersward	77 Alison Tomkinson
176 Alistair Maynard	48 Julie Rigby	75 Dave Tompkins
237 Lesley Mazey	32 Roger Robinson	94 Helena Tudor
236 Steve Mazey	81 Tony Rogers	118 Tobes Valois
201 Heather McKiggan-	188 Angela Rosin	167 Jim Walker
49 Alex McLintock	60 Marcus Rowland	215 Huw Walters
116 Pat McMurray	113 Yvonne Rowse	158 Lesley Ward
148 John Meaney	144 Alison Scott	38 Peter Wareham
149 Yvonne Meaney	109 Mike Scott	234 Jeanette Warren
203 Farah Mendlesohn	151 Gavin Shorrock	185 Kevin Warwick
150 Nick Mills	45 Ina Shorrock	64 Alan Webb
35 Pauline Morgan	214 Neil Simpson	62 Gerry Webb
36 Chris Morgan	190 Mark Sinclair	139 Barbara Weidman
42 Carol Morton	189 Sally Sinclair	123 Peter Weston
43 Tony Morton	226 Martin Sketchley	124 Eileen Weston
197 Martin Mounsey	162 Mark Slater	135 Laura Wheatly
12 Caroline Mullan	71 Ken Slater	80 Bridget Wilkinson
102 Chris Murphy	130 Frank R Smith	15 Caro Wilson
224 Robert Newman	241 Martin Smith	86 Anne Wilson
225 Hazel Newman	22 Robert Sneddon	52 Anne Woodford
204 Lisanne Norman	69 Adrian Snowdon	53 Alan Woodford
169 Paul O'Brien	106 Kate Solomon	92 Pete Young
235 Si O'Connell	82 Ian Sorensen	
211 John O'Donnell	19 Maureen Kincaid	
212 June O'Donnell	100 Richard Standage	
122 Roderick O'Hanlon	229 Magdalen Standage-	
208 Dave O'Neil	228 Danesh Standage-	
23 Chris O'Shea	136 Tim Stannard	
121 Krystyna Oborn	192 Billy Stirling	
57 Paul Oldroyd	59 Chris Stocks	

Just when you thought it was safe to put your wallet away...



Guest Of Honour:
John Courtenay Grimwood

At the Quality Hotel, Walsall
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Committee: Martin Tudor (Chair); Dave Hicks (Programme);
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"Grant Naylor", Terry Pratchett, David Pringle,
Robert Rankin, Alastair Reynolds, Kim Stanley Robinson,
Michael Scott Rohan, Dan Simmons, Ian Stewart,
Sheri S Tepper, Patrick Tilley, Freda Warrington,
Ian Watson, Tad Williams,
David Wingrove and "Jonathan Wylie" ?***

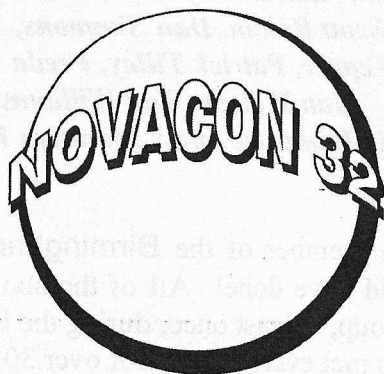
If you were a member of the **Birmingham Science Fiction Group** you could have done! All of the above (and more!) have spoken to the Group, at least once, during the last 17 years.

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